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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN PLACER COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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and  
Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

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This publication is one of a series of 11 with similar titles by Tom Vasey and Josiah C. Folsom. The reports are based on surveys made in the late summer and early autumn of 1936 of the economic and social conditions of adult agricultural laborers. The counties studied represent various types of farming in different parts of the United States, as follows:

<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Type of Farming</u>
California	Placer	Fruit
Colorado	Archuleta	Stock-ranch
Illinois	Livingston	Corn
Iowa	Hamilton	Corn-Hog
Kansas	Pawnee	Winter wheat
Kentucky	Todd	Tobacco
Louisiana	Concordia Parish	Cotton (eastern)
Minnesota	Lac qui Parle	Small grain
Pennsylvania	Wayne	Dairy
Tennessee	Fentress	Self-sufficing
Texas	Karnes	Cotton (western)

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# SURVEY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOR CONDITIONS IN PLACER COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

By Tom Vasey, Farm Security Administration  
and  
Josiah C. Folsom, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

During the summer and fall of 1936 the Bureau of Agricultural Economics was asked by the Works Progress Administration to make surveys of agricultural labor conditions in 11 counties in as many States. Since the study was to represent varying types of agriculture, Placer County, California, was included largely because of the fruit farms predominant within its borders.

Enumerators were engaged to canvass the hired farm laborers and their farm-operator employers, and schedules were provided to record the information drawn from each of these groups. The schedule designed for use among the laborers was rather complete. In addition to inquiries as to general characteristics such as age, sex, education, etc., questions were included to cover incomes for the previous year, job descriptions, wage rates, work histories for the preceding 12 months, and participation in community affairs. The farm operators in their turn were asked concerning wage rates, fluctuations in numbers of employees, and methods of securing labor. /1

The enumerators were instructed to use the limited time available for reaching, as nearly as possible, all farms in the county hiring labor. Exceptions were made, however, of farms not primarily dependent on agriculture as a source of income -- of country estates, livestock dealers, institutions, feed lots, boarding and lodging places, and unclassified farms, for example. As to the laborers, the enumerators were directed to interview "only those hired to do the work of adults at adult wages." This procedure eliminated all unpaid family labor, as well as any child labor employed at wage rates lower than those of adults. The terms, "hired labor" and "employees," are used here to signify individuals working for and dependent on wages. The wages, which are paid by the operator, have nothing to do with possible profits or losses accruing from the crop. For the purposes of the study, the status of the operator as renter or owner was not considered.

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/1 The work was directed by representatives of the Department of Agriculture. The officials of the Experiment Station and College of Agriculture cooperated in making suggestions for the study and in securing the enumerators, William F. Menke of Oakland and Anthony J. Tarlock of Berkeley.



Table 1.- Age and education of 234 agricultural laborers, by race, Placer County, California, September 1936

Age	Race	Total	Grades completed				
			0-4	5-7	8	9-12	Over 12
15	White	1	-	-	-	1	-
16		-	-	-	-	-	-
17	White	2	-	-	1	1	-
	Oriental	1	-	-	-	1	-
18	White	2	1	-	1	-	-
19	White	1	-	-	-	1	-
	Oriental	1	-	-	-	1	-
20-29	White	24	-	1	8	13	2
	Oriental	2	-	1	1	-	-
	Other	2	1	1	-	-	-
30-39	White	26	4	3	10	9	-
	Oriental	26	5	9	5	5	2
	Other	3	2	1	-	-	-
40-49	White	25	5	9	6	4	1
	Oriental	23	5	6	7	4	1
	Other	6	3	3	-	-	-
50-59	White	22	4	7	9	2	-
	Oriental	38	6	12	10	9	1
	Other	5	3	1	-	-	1
60-69	White	8	3	2	2	-	1
	Oriental	14	5	2	2	5	-
70-79		-	-	-	-	-	-
80-89	White	1	1	-	-	-	-
Not rep't	White	1	-	-	-	1	-
Total:							
	White	113	18	22	37	32	4
	Oriental	105	21	30	25	25	4
	Other /1	16	9	6	-	-	1
Grand total			234	48	58	62	57

/1 "Other" includes 7 Hindustanis, 6 Mexicans, 1 American Indian, 1 Afghan, and 4 not reported.



Placer County, California, stretches across the Sierra Nevada Mountains and reaches partially into the Sacramento Valley. The portion of the county which includes rolling foothills shows the highest agricultural development. Fruit farms, producing cherries, peaches, and other deciduous fruits, are of primary importance; and, as pickers and packers are needed in large numbers during the peak harvest season, they create the labor demand of the county. Farms of other types, such as poultry and dairy farms, show no great seasonal labor requirements. At the time of the survey, unfortunately, the period of peak employment had passed. The migrant workers, who are so numerous during part of every year, had gone, leaving only the permanent hands available for interview. Hence it is impossible in this report to touch upon the migrant labor problem.

Most of the 1,575 farms enumerated in the 1935 census were visited during the survey, and 120 of them were found hiring laborers. Of the 380 laborers working on these farms, 235 were contacted, and the data presented here are taken largely from their schedules.

#### General Characteristics

Permanent labor as well as transient labor includes members of several races. Among the non-white workers, Japanese and Chinese predominate, but there are also Hindustanis, American Indians, and a few Mexicans. This report deals primarily with the whites and the Orientals who constitute the two major groups.

The farm workers in Placer County were generally older than those in the other counties covered by this study. They were also older than the average for agricultural laborers in California as reported by the 1930 Census. The census shows that 38 percent of all male agricultural wage laborers in the State were under 30 years of age; <sup>/2</sup> but of those included in the present survey, only 15 percent were of a similar age. Oriental workers are generally older than white workers; only 4 percent of the Orientals as compared with 26 percent of the whites were less than 30 years old. On the other hand, one-half the Orientals and only one-fourth of the whites were 50 years of age or over. The children of the Japanese and Chinese workers apparently have not stayed on the farms of Placer County, for only 9 American-born Orientals were found by the enumerators.

Whites and Orientals reported about the same amount of schooling, despite age differences and the fact that most of the Orientals were born abroad (Table 1). More than one-half of each group had completed the eighth grade, and many had secured additional schooling. Almost as many Orientals as whites had gone to high school, and the same number in each group had sought college training.

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<sup>/2</sup> As determined from data furnished by the Bureau of the Census.



Only one-fourth of the entire group, 36 percent of the whites and less than 10 percent of the Orientals, were single men. That the percentage of married men is unusually high among the Orientals is directly related to the fact that the Orientals among the farm laborers were older than the whites (Table 2).

Table 2.- Marital status of 235 farm laborers, by race,  
Placer County, California, September 1936

Marital status	Total		White		Oriental		Other	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Unmarried	60	25.7	41	36.3	10	9.5	9	56.2
Married	158	67.5	63	55.8	90 <u>/1</u>	85.7	5	31.2
Widowed	10	4.3	5	4.4	4	3.8	1	6.3
Divorced	1	.4	1	.9	-	-	-	-
Separated	5	2.1	3	2.6	1	1.0	1	6.3
Total	234	100.0	113	100.0	105	100.0	16	100.0

/1 Two females included.

A larger proportion of Orientals than of whites reported dependents, the Orientals likewise reporting larger families (Table 3). The Oriental family most commonly found included 6 persons -- 5 dependents and the head. Two-person families were more frequent among the whites than those of any other size. Among the whites, however, the average family consisted of 4.0 persons, and among the Orientals, of 5.3 persons.

Table 3.- Dependents of 218 agricultural laborers, by race,  
Placer County, California, September 1936

Number of dependents:	Number of laborers					
	Total		White		Oriental	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0	67	30.7	48	42.5	19	18.0
1	27	12.4	19	16.8	8	7.6
2	16	7.3	10	8.8	6	5.7
3	31	14.2	15	13.3	16	15.2
4	26	11.9	11	9.7	15	14.3
5	25	11.5	4	3.5	21	20.0
6	10	4.6	1	.9	9	8.6
7	6	2.8	1	.9	5	4.8
8	7	3.2	3	2.7	4	3.8
9	2	.9	1	.9	1	1.0
10	1	.5	-	-	1	1.0
Total	218	100.0	113	100.0	105	100.0



Very few of the workers interviewed had been born in California, only 15.5 percent giving this State as their birthplace (Table 4). More than one-half of the total number were foreign-born, and nearly all of these were Orientals. Even among the whites, the foreign-born workers outnumbered those who were natives of California. One-half of the whites came from other parts of the United States, and, although many of these came from the Middle West, States in other sections, too, had contributed some members to the group.

Table 4.- Nativity of 232 agricultural laborers, by race,  
Placer County, California, September 1936

Birthplace	Total		White		Oriental		Other	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	36	15.5	26	23.2	9	8.6	1	6.7
Foreign countries	139 <u>/1</u>	59.9	30	26.8	96 <u>/1</u>	91.4	13	86.6
Missouri	9	3.9	9	8.0	-	-	-	-
Oklahoma	6	2.6	6	5.3	-	-	-	-
Michigan	5	2.2	5	4.4	-	-	-	-
Illinois	4	1.7	4	3.6	-	-	-	-
Maine	3	1.3	3	2.7	-	-	-	-
Iowa	3	1.3	3	2.7	-	-	-	-
Arkansas	3	1.3	3	2.7	-	-	-	-
Texas	3	1.3	3	2.7	-	-	-	-
Other States	21	9.0	20	17.9	-	-	1	6.7
Total	232	100.0	112	100.0	105	100.0	15	100.0

/1 Includes 2 females.

Very few of the laborers who had been born outside California made any attempt to locate work elsewhere once they had come into the State. Migrations for the purpose of finding jobs were almost entirely intra-state. Practically all the workers reported California as their home. Eight listed other States; but of these, six had entered California in 1936, and the probability that they will maintain their out-of-the-State residence is doubtful.

Most of the men, when questioned, stated that they were general farm laborers, doing whatever tasks were assigned. All the Orientals worked as general hands on fruit farms. The majority of the whites, as well, were similarly employed, although there were some who worked on poultry, dairy, and general farms. A few cases of specialization were also noted; 2 workers were hired solely for harvest work, 2 for machine work, and 13 for care of livestock.



### Tenure Experience

Two-fifths of the farm laborers had had some experience as farm operators, some as sharecroppers and others as tenants or owners (Table 5). A large number reported "sharecropping" in California, but this term should probably be interpreted as renting on shares. Although the rent in such cases was determined by the crops, the renter, according to the usual agreement, supplied equipment as well as his labor. For those who reported former sharecropping tenure in the Southern States, however, the term undoubtedly meant that labor alone was furnished in exchange for a share of the crop.

Table 5.- Previous farm operation experience of 234 farm laborers, by race, Placer County, California, September 1936

Experience	: Total		: White		: Oriental		: Other	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
None	138	59.0	68	60.1	60	57.1	10	62.6
Share-cropper	38	16.2	14	12.4	21	20.0	3	18.8
Tenant	28	12.0	8	7.1	19	18.1	1	6.2
Cropper and tenant	1	.4	-	-	-	-	1	6.2
Owner	24	10.3	20	17.7	4	3.8	-	-
Owner and cropper	4	1.7	2	1.8	1	1.0	1	6.2
Owner and tenant	1	.4	1	.9	-	-	-	-
Total	234	100.0	113	100.0	105	100.0	16	100.0

Some of the workers who reported experience as renters or owners were still operating farms in addition to working out for wages. Twelve of the 24 with ownership experience fell in this category. Farm laborers who had lost their status as operators offered various reasons — general inability to make a profit, change in land ownership, or the forces of nature. Some of these had given up operation of a farm in recent years, but many of them had turned to farm labor long before the last series of drought years struck the Middle West.

### Income

The incomes as reported for the last twelve months preceding the interview showed a wide variation, ranging from bare maintenance to \$1,800 in cash. Among the more highly paid workers were some who probably acted as foremen during rush periods, and their wages and incomes were determined partially by this factor. But among the majority of the workers interviewed, the variations in income must be explained in other ways (Table 6).



Table 6.- Total income, September 1935 - August 1936 of 233 agricultural workers, by race, Placer County, Calif.

Total income	Number	Percent	Agricultural earnings				Nonagricultural earnings				Relief		
			Average : per family	By head of family	By dependents	By family as unit	By laborer	By dependents					
									Number	Average		Number	Average
\$ 0-199	14 1/2	6.0	\$ 91	13	\$ 90	-	1	\$ 100	2	\$ 78	-	2 1/4	\$ 82
White	12	10.7	99	11	99	-	1	100	1	30	-	2 1/4	82
Oriental	1	1.0	25	1	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
200-399	44	18.9	271	44	266	4	-	-	7	117	1	-	-
White	23	20.5	253	23	242	4	-	-	7	117	1	-	-
Oriental	17	16.2	299	17	299	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
400-599	40	17.2	443	36	411	5	3	367	5	286	2	5 1/2	207
White	19	17.0	360	17	394	2	-	-	5	286	2	5 1/2	207
Oriental	14	13.3	483	13	455	3	2	350	-	-	-	-	-
600-799	61	26.2	626	59	551	23	4	559	4	365	-	1 1/2	304
White	34	30.4	613	32	571	7	2	650	4	365	-	1 1/2	304
Oriental	25	23.8	669	25	521	16	2	468	-	-	-	-	-
800-999	35	15.0	874	28	726	19	8	816	-	-	1	-	-
White	10	8.9	856	9	856	1	1	800	-	-	1	-	-
Oriental	25	23.8	879	19	665	18	7	818	-	-	-	-	-
1,000-1,199	19	8.1	1,033	15	801	10	4	1,021	-	-	-	-	-
White	5	4.5	1,052	4	911	1	1	1,000	-	-	-	-	-
Oriental	12	11.4	1,046	9	728	8	3	1,028	-	-	-	-	-
1,200-over/2	20	8.6	1,359	14	914	10	6	1,433	1	957	1	1 1/4	240
White	9	8.0	1,321	7	1,150	3	2	1,250	1	957	-	1 1/4	240
Oriental	11	10.5	1,390	7	677	7	4	1,475	-	-	1	-	-
Totals	233	100.0	\$ 628	209	\$ 506	71	26	\$ 871	19	\$ 254	5	9	\$ 194
White	112	100.0	539	103	495	18	7	843	18	261	4	9	194
Oriental	105	100.0	747	91	527	52	18	908	-	-	1	-	-

<sup>1</sup> "Number" refers to the number of laborers reporting in the particular column not to the number of dependents reported.

<sup>2</sup> Some totals include laborers in addition to whites and Orientals.

<sup>3</sup> As high as \$1,800.

<sup>4</sup> Direct relief.

<sup>5</sup> Work relief.



The annual earnings reported most frequently came to slightly less than \$700 for the whites and to slightly more than \$700 for the Orientals. Average incomes, which show a comparable racial difference, amounted to \$539 for the whites and \$747 for the Orientals.

Incomes naturally are affected by the sources from which they are derived and by the number of workers per family unit. Agricultural earnings may represent only labor performed by the head of the family, or again, they may be those of his children or of his family as a unit. Non-agricultural earnings were reported by 19 laborers, and by other members of the family in 5 cases. Nine families had received relief.

None of the Oriental laborers and only 1 other member of an Oriental family reported nonagricultural earnings, but the Oriental farm laborers reported other members of the family assisting in agriculture more frequently than did whites. In nearly one-half of the Oriental families as compared with only one-sixth of the white families, other members added to the family income. Similarly, 17 percent of the Oriental and 6 percent of the white families reported group earnings. The larger earnings of Oriental workers evidently reflects the greater number of workers per family unit.

Well over one-half of this group of workers had had more than 10 months of agricultural work in the year previous to the interview (Table 7). Although only 18 whites reported earnings through nonagricultural employment, 19 reported days of work in nonagricultural as well as agri-

Table 7.- Days worked in agriculture and in mixed employment by 110 white and 105 Oriental farm laborers, Placer County, California

Days worked	:	Agricultural	:	Mixed employment /1	
	:	employment	:	White	
	:	:	:	Average in:	
	:	White	Oriental	Number	agriculture:nonagriculture
0- 29		9	1	-	-
30- 59		5	1	1	40
60- 89		5	3	2	41
90-119		2	1	3	45
120-149		2	1	2	82
150-179		6	1	2	130
180-209		3	5	2	110
210-239		2	1	-	-
240-269		4	7	1	209
270-312		53	84	6	190
Total		91	105	19	118
					64

/1 No Orientals reported nonagricultural employment.



cultural occupations. Even among those who had had several jobs, relatively long-time employment was the rule; 6 of the 19 had worked 270 days or more during the year.

### Assets

Despite the fact that the laborers in this particular group received higher wages and greater incomes than the workers surveyed in other States, they did not cite appreciably greater assets. Ownership of an automobile was reported most frequently. Although 80 percent of the white and 87 percent of the Oriental laborers lived on the farms upon which they were working, 66 percent of the whites and 74 percent of the Orientals possessed cars. Only a few owned any farm land; 17 whites listed property which averaged 37.8 acres, and 6 Orientals held an average of 21.3 acres each. Ownership of other real estate was reported by 14 whites and 3 Orientals. Thirty-three white workers and 51 Orientals carried life insurance policies averaging \$2,423 and \$1,721. Average bank accounts of \$428 and \$281 were reported by 17 whites and 6 Orientals.

### Wage Rates

Wage rates and bases of payment varied as widely as annual incomes. Men were found working by the hour, by the day, and by the month. The highest hourly rate was nearly twice as great as the lowest, the highest daily rate amounted to three times as much as the lowest, and the highest monthly rate was fifteen times as great as the lowest (Tables 8, 9, 10).

The majority of the hired farm laborers were paid by the month; among the others, hourly wages were more usual than daily pay. Oriental workers were paid by the month more frequently than white workers.

Without regard to perquisites, average rates of pay as reported by the laborers were \$56.55 and \$55.57 per month, \$2.28 and \$2.50 per day, and \$.27 and \$.25 per hour for whites and Orientals respectively. The schedules secured from the operators showed approximately the same wage rates (Tables 8, 9, 10).

In addition to cash wages, farm laborers generally received pay in kind, board and lodging comprising the most valuable item. By far the greater proportion of workers were given house rent in addition to their pay, and in many instances garden space, provisions, or other perquisites were likewise to be had. Nevertheless, the proportion receiving such incidental remuneration was much less in California than in the other States where these county surveys were made.

Average wages do not indicate the value of the perquisites; in fact, the more valuable perquisites generally accompany the higher wages. The better and more permanent workers, apparently, are paid more in cash as well as more in kind.



Table 8.- Monthly wage rates with specified perquisites reported  
by agricultural laborers, by race, Placer County,  
California, September 1936

Rate	Whites				Orientals			
	Perquisites				Perquisites			
	Total	Without	With	With	Total	Without	With	With
	:	: board	: board	: house	:	: board	: board	: house
\$ 10.00	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
25.00	2	1	-	1	2	-	-	2
30.00	5	1	4	-	7	-	4	3
35.00	6	-	4	2	3	-	1	2
40.00	3	-	3	-	5	-	-	5
42.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
45.00	3	-	1	2	1	-	-	1
50.00	12	1	4	7	16	-	1	15
55.00	2	-	-	2	2	-	-	2
60.00	6	1	2	3	7	-	-	7
62.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
65.00	2	1	1	-	3	-	-	3
67.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
70.00	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	2
75.00	8	-	2	6	7	-	-	7
80.00	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
85.00	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
90.00	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
95.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
100.00	5	1	-	4	1	-	-	1
150.00	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	58	7	22	29	66	0	6	50
Averages	\$56.55	\$68.57	\$44.09	\$63.10	\$55.57		\$34.17	\$57.71

Table 9.- Hourly and daily wage rates and perquisites, by race,  
received by agricultural laborers, Placer County, California

Rate	Whites				Orientals			
	Perquisites				Perquisites			
	Total	Without	With	With	Total	Without	With	With
	:	: board	: board	: house	:	: board	: board	: house
Per day:								
\$ 1.25	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
1.50	6	1	5	-	-	-	-	-
2.50	3	3	-	-	11	-	3	8
2.75	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
3.00	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
4.00	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16	8	7	1	11	-	3	8
Average	\$2.28	\$2.75	\$1.64	\$3.00	\$2.50	-	\$2.50	\$2.50
Per hour:								
\$ .20	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
.25	19	9	-	10	15	6	2	7
.30	7	5	-	2	1	-	1	-
.35	2	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Total	28	15	-	13	18	6	5	7
Average	\$.27	\$.27	-	\$.27	\$.25	\$.25	\$.24	\$.25



Table 10.- Time wage and perquisites paid to agricultural laborers, by race, as reported by farm operators, Placer County, California, September 1936

Rate	Whites				Orientals			
	Perquisites				Perquisites			
	Total	Without board	With board	With house	Total	Without board	With board	With house
Per day:								
\$ 1.50	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
2.50	10	10	-	-	8	8	-	-
2.75	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.00	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16	14	2	-	8	8	-	-
Average	\$2.47	\$2.61	\$1.50	-	\$2.50	\$2.50	-	-
Per month:								
\$10.00	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
25.00	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	1
30.00	6	1	4	1	4	-	1	3
35.00	4	-	3	1	2	-	1	1
40.00	4	-	4	-	5	-	-	5
42.50	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
45.00	4	1	2	1	1	-	-	1
50.00	7	-	2	5	13	1	-	12
55.00	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1
60.00	7	-	1	6	4	-	-	4
65.00	2	1	-	1	3	-	-	3
67.50	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
70.00	3	-	-	3	2	-	-	2
75.00	9	1	1	7	9	-	-	9
80.00	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
85.00	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
90.00	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
100.00	4	2	-	2	1	-	-	1
Total	57	7	20	30	51	1	2	48
Average	\$54.34	\$62.86	\$38.62	\$62.83	\$56.37	\$50.00	\$32.50	\$57.50

#### Tenure of Employment

Instability generally marks the tenure of agricultural employment. Of the 111 fruit farms visited, the operators average 2.9 employees during September, 11.8 during their busiest month, July, and only 1.6 during the slack months, October and November. Laborers employed for the crop season can generally anticipate 32 to 35 weeks of work. The casual labor, which many operators do not hire until harvest time, can expect the more or less intermittent demand for fruit pickers to spread over 9 to 14 weeks.



The laborers interviewed were obviously permanent rather than casual employees. The Orientals gave particular evidence of stability. In September or October 1936, one-half of them were still working on jobs which they had held at the beginning of 1935 (Table 11). One-half of the whites had been on their present jobs since June 1936. However, some members of each race were short-time employees, having been hired as recently as September and October 1936.

Table 11.- Date 214 present farm jobs began, Placer County, California, September 1936

Date of beginning	White		Oriental	
	: Cumulative		: Cumulative	
	: Number	: percent	: Number	: percent
Previous to 1930	16	14.5	18	17.3
1930	-	14.5	3	20.2
1931	6	20.0	5	25.0
1932	3	22.7	5	29.8
1933	2	24.5	10	39.4
1934	5	29.1	14	52.9
1935 January	-	29.1	-	52.9
February	-	29.1	-	52.9
March	-	29.1	1	53.8
April	3	31.8	2	55.8
May	-	31.8	-	55.8
June	1	32.7	-	55.8
July	1	33.6	-	55.8
August	-	33.6	-	55.8
September	2	25.5	5	60.6
October	2	37.3	8	68.3
November	1	38.2	9	76.9
December	1	39.1	2	78.8
1936 January	3	41.8	1	79.8
February	1	42.7	-	79.8
March	1	43.6	1	80.8
April	4	47.3	-	80.8
May	1	48.2	-	80.8
June	10	57.3	3	83.7
July	9	65.5	1	84.6
August	9	73.6	1	85.6
September	16	88.2	11	96.2
October	13	100.0	4	100.0
Total	110	-	104	-



Direct contact between employer and prospective employee was the usual method of placement (Table 12). The only other important method of filling jobs was reported by the laborers as "through a friend," and by the employers as "sending one employee to recruit others." A small number used public or private employment agencies. Several Orientals, as well as a few whites, obtained work through labor contractors and through advertisements.

Table 12.- Method of placement of farm laborers, Placer County, California, September 1936

Method	Laborers					
	White		Oriental		Operators	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Laborers' search	67	58.8	91	86.7	69	52.7
Operators' search	1	.9	-	-	85	64.9
Through a friend	28	24.5	-	-	-	-
Sending one employee to recruit others	-	-	-	-	22	16.8
Through public employment agency	5	4.4	-	-	6	4.6
Through a private employment agency	6	5.2	-	-	12	9.2
Through a labor contractor	2	1.8	3	2.9	-	-
Through advertising	5	4.4	10	9.5	1	.8
Miscellaneous	-	-	1	.9	9	6.9

/1 Percent of the 131 who report this method. As each operator may report more than one method, this column does not necessarily total 100 percent.

#### Community Participation

Membership in organized groups played a very minor part in the lives of the workers. None were members of an agricultural labor union; 4 whites had been members of nonagricultural unions, and a fifth was still a member. The Grange claimed 3 members among the white farm laborers, and the Farm Bureau reported 2 whites and 1 Oriental. Two other whites had permitted their membership in the Farm Bureau to lapse. A few white workers, but no Orientals, had taken part in farmers' institutes or farm-practice demonstrations during the previous year.

More workers reported attending the movies than any of the other informal gatherings mentioned (Table 13). Shopping trips ranked in importance with the movies. Orientals participated in religious services more frequently than whites but they took less part in the other social activities listed.



Table 13.- Community participation of 113 white and 105 Oriental agricultural laborers, Placer County, California, September 1935 - September 1936

Activity	White			Oriental		
	: Number : reporting	: Percent : reporting	: Average : reported	: Number : reporting	: Percent : reporting	: Average : reported
Movies	89	78.8	24.8	89	84.8	9.9
Shopping	65	57.5	38.8	86	81.9	27.2
Religious meetings	41	36.3	17.0	76	72.4	24.8
Circus	38	33.6	1.4	51	48.6	1.2
Community entertainment	35	31.0	2.6	75	71.4	1.2
Visits to friends or relatives	34	30.1	3.6	32	30.5	1.9
Ball games	29	25.7	10.1	35	33.3	6.6
Fishing trips	25	22.1	3.6	15	14.3	1.8
Farm-practice demonstrations	3	2.7	4.3	-	-	-
Farmers' institutes	2	1.8	1.0	-	-	-

To recapitulate, the picture outlined here represents the permanent farm laborers of Placer County. The study does not touch the migrant labor of California, which comes into Placer County in a small stream during the fruit harvest. Although all the workers in Placer County seem fairly permanent with long periods of employment, the Orientals appear to have greater stability than the whites. In this area, which is one of the older fruit-growing sections of the State, the Orientals are better established than any of the racial groups reporting a later arrival, and, as permanent residents, they have rather steady work and moderate incomes.



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